

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022

VAPIHCS

PRIDE

NEWSLETTER



BLACK HISTORY MONTH : BLACK LGBTQ+ HEALTH AND WELLNESS

February is **Black History Month**, a nationally recognized month dedicated to the celebration of achievements by Black and African American individuals and recognition of their critical role in the history of the United States. This year's theme is [Black Health and Wellness](#).

Given that many of our LGBTQ+ Veterans are Black or African American, it is our duty to commemorate their experiences, accomplishments, and crucial roles in the United States military and history.

This Newsletter will highlight Black History, Black LGBTQ+ Trailblazers, LGBTQ+ affirmative care, and a variety of educational, community building, and research-based opportunities:

- Veterans: read about Black History, receive sexual healthcare at the VA, share your story, and get involved in research
- Providers and Staff: read about Black History, participate in a survey, and attend a summit or webinar

Applying for a Discharge Upgrade:

Veterans are able to apply for a discharge upgrade if they show that their discharge was connected to their sexual orientation. Go [here](#) to learn more and apply.

Questions or feedback? Please email Dr. Steven Hobaica at Steven.Hobaica@va.gov.



VA PACIFIC ISLANDS
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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A PROCLAMATION ON NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH, 2022

-THE WHITE HOUSE



“EACH FEBRUARY, NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH SERVES AS BOTH A CELEBRATION AND A POWERFUL REMINDER THAT BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY, BLACK CULTURE IS AMERICAN CULTURE, AND BLACK STORIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE ONGOING STORY OF AMERICA — OUR FAULTS, OUR STRUGGLES, OUR PROGRESS, AND OUR ASPIRATIONS. SHINING A LIGHT ON BLACK HISTORY TODAY IS AS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES AND GROWING STRONGER AS A NATION AS IT HAS EVER BEEN. THAT IS WHY IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE TAKE TIME TO CELEBRATE THE IMMEASURABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK AMERICANS, HONOR THE LEGACIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF GENERATIONS PAST, RECKON WITH CENTURIES OF INJUSTICE, AND CONFRONT THOSE INJUSTICES THAT STILL FESTER TODAY.”

READ MORE [HERE!](#)



A MESSAGE FROM VHA CHIEF OF STAFF

-JON M. JENSEN



"THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER WEEK OF DEDICATED WORK SERVING VETERANS. THIS WEEK KICKED OFF BLACK HISTORY MONTH, FIRST ESTABLISHED AS BLACK HISTORY WEEK IN 1926 BY DR. CARTER G. WOODSON TO COINCIDE WITH THE BIRTHDAYS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS. NEARLY 100 YEARS LATER, THIS OBSERVANCE REMINDS US TO CELEBRATE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK AMERICANS TO OUR NATION, REFLECT ON THE INJUSTICES OF OUR PAST, AND COMBAT INEQUALITIES THAT CONTINUE TODAY. ACTIVIST, ABOLITIONIST, AND UNION ARMY VETERAN HARRIET TUBMAN BELIEVED, "EVERY GREAT DREAM BEGINS WITH A DREAMER. ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU HAVE WITHIN YOU THE STRENGTH, THE PATIENCE, AND THE PASSION TO REACH FOR THE STARS TO CHANGE THE WORLD." THIS MONTH LET US ALL COMMIT TO CHANGING THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER."



BLACK HISTORY MONTH: BLACK LGBTQ+ TRAILBLAZERS WHO MADE HISTORY

READ MORE: [NBC NEWS](#)

BAYARD RUSTIN

Rustin was an LGBTQ and civil rights activist best known for being a key adviser to Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Rustin promoted nonviolent resistance and organized the 1963 March on Washington. In 2013, Rustin was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, for his tireless work promoting equal rights.



MARSHA P. JOHNSON

Johnson was an outspoken transgender rights activist, and she is reported to be one of the central figures of the historic Stonewall Riots of 1969. Along with fellow trans activist Sylvia Rivera, Johnson helped form Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries (STAR) and the STAR House to help young trans women and drag queens. Johnson is the subject of the new Netflix documentary "The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson."



SEXUAL HEALTH AT VA PACIFIC ISLANDS



PrEP for HIV Prevention:

When PrEP is taken daily, it can greatly reduce your risk for HIV

PEP for HIV Prevention:

When PEP is taken within 72 hours of possible exposure to HIV, it can greatly reduce your risk for HIV



STI and Pregnancy Prevention:

Various types of birth control (e.g., pill, implant, IUD), condoms, and other preventative materials are available to you

Sexual Health Education

Appointments with the LGBTQ+ Program, Whole Health, or Pharmacy to learn about sexual health and get needed care



Talk with Your Provider

There are more sexual healthcare options than ever before. Talk to your doctor about which options are right for you.

Appointments by Phone or VA Video Connect (VVC)

Interested? Get scheduled by messaging Whole Health or the LGBTQ+ Program on MyHealtheVet, by calling pharmacy, or by asking your provider for a referral



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

HI Department of Health Sexual and Gender Minorities Resource Hub

- A resource hub for LGBTQ+ people in Hawai'i
- Contains information on trainings, events, LGBTQ+ terms and education, Ohana support, legal support, and other local and national resources
- Local SGM Services Directory: Go [here](#)!

Hawai'i LGBT Legacy Foundation Resources

- A resource listing that identifies organizations that help LGBTQ+ individuals
- Contains information on advocacy, schools, businesses, social/personal issues, legal, healthcare, financial services, faith-based agencies, news, and annual Pride events
- Go [here](#) to see the list!



Community organizations are not endorsed by the VA



RESEARCH



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

Are you a Veteran living with a spinal cord injury?

Do you self-identify as LGBTQ+?

Join our research study to explore your experiences with healthcare at VA.

Time commitment:

- Approximately 1 hour for a **one-on-one** phone interview plus completion of an online survey

Incentive:


- Receive a stipend for your participation

You may be eligible if you:

- ✓ Are a Veteran
- ✓ have an SCI for at least 6 months
- ✓ self-identify as LGBTQ+*
- ✓ are 18 years of age or older

** Sexual orientation/gender identity does not need to be documented in your medical records to be eligible.*

Participation is open across the US



For information on the study and how to join, please contact:
Shane Lamba
650-493-5000
ext.64479

For questions on participants' rights, contact:
866-680-2906

This research is not being conducted by VAPIHCS

Are you a transgender Veteran?

Do you have depression?



Would you be interested in participating in a one-time interview to help the VA better understand the mental healthcare experiences of transgender Veterans? You do not need to be receiving care from the VA.

If so, please contact Masheka Fuqua at 317-988-9597 or Masheka.Fuqua@va.gov.

You will be compensated for your time.



This project is not being conducted by VAPIHCS

VHA OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY UPDATES

CHARTBOOK ON THE HEALTH OF LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL VETERANS

This chartbook:

- Summarizes information on LGB Veterans and their health
- Describes efforts by VA facilities to be more welcoming and inclusive of LGBTQ+ Veterans

Go [here](#) for more information!



HEALTH EQUITY PODCAST EPISODE 8: LGBTQ+ VETERAN HEALTH

This podcast:

- Summarizes the findings of the LGB Veteran Health Chartbook
- Discusses results that showed LGB Veterans having worse health status than straight Veterans and LGBTQ+ non-Veterans
- Emphasizes that LGBTQ+ Veterans are not to blame for this disparity
- Demonstrates that military service has harmed LGBTQ+ individuals

Go [here](#) to listen!



LGBTQ+ PEOPLE LEAD IN COVID-19 VACCINATION RATES

A recent report suggests that 91% of LGBTQ+ adults surveyed are fully vaccinated!

Unvaccinated people are 6.1 times more likely to test positive for COVID-19 and 11.3 times more likely to die from COVID-19, in comparison to fully vaccinated people.

To protect yourself, your community, and your O'hana, get vaccinated for free at VA PIHCS!

Follow this link to find more information and to schedule your vaccination appointment: [VAPIHCS](#)

For more information on statistics shared above: [HRC](#) and [CDC](#)



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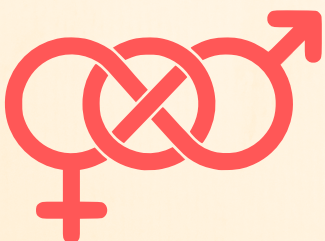
-JESSICA SPURRIER, SHE/HER



When I was pregnant with my first child, everyone's immediate question upon learning my news was, "Is it a boy or a girl?" I opted not to find out this information until the time of the baby's birth, which made friends and family members very uncomfortable. They seemed interested in already assigning familiar character traits to this tiny forming human. When my child was born, such inquiries continued... "is your baby a boy?" followed by, "What a tough little guy" or "His grip is so strong!"

When I had my second child, I ended up having an ultrasound as a family member wore me down. She was eager to spend money on the "appropriate" pink or blue gift items. At one point, this same family member was incredibly upset as my husband bought our infant daughter an army green "boy's t-shirt" on the clearance rack. The tiny garment had a picture of a cartoon figure performing a high kick and said "karate!" in neon orange. Granted, the shirt was hideous, but this relative promptly removed the shirt from my baby, ran to another room, and returned five minutes later with white lace sewn around the neck and arm openings. Although suggested as a joke, this interaction between my husband and my mother-in-law made me cringe. I was thrilled to have healthy children who would have the opportunity to create their own identities and follow their own life paths.

I found myself working as a nurse in the VA endocrine clinic and also served on the board of a local clinic providing care primarily to LGBTQ+ individuals. While in these roles I couldn't help to reflect on how far we have come in terms of forcing people, even before birth, into limited boxes for our own comfort and convenience. Although there is a long way yet to go, I am proud of my colleagues at VA Pacific Islands and the work being done to ensure all Veterans feel welcome and supported when they come to us for care.



THE INAUGURAL STATE OF LGBTQ HEALTH NATIONAL SURVEY

The National Coalition for LGBTQ Health is launching its **Inaugural State of LGBTQ Health National Survey™** to assess the healthcare landscape for LGBTQ patient populations. This survey covers intersectional topics in LGBTQ health including clinical/behavioral health, stigma, social justice, housing/homelessness, health disparities among communities of color, and COVID-19.

The insights you provide by completing this brief yet comprehensive survey will help inform ongoing advocacy, education, research, and training activities that support LGBTQ health care. Your input also will help determine the theme for the Coalition's 20th Annual LGBTQ Health National Awareness Week to be held March 21-25, 2022.

Who Should Participate?

Healthcare providers (physicians, physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, behavioral health professionals, community health workers, and others) who provide care for LGBTQ individuals.

Go [here](#) for the survey!

Community projects and research are not endorsed by the VA



ALL OF ME SUMMIT

THE INTERSECTIONS OF MEDICAL MIS/DISTRUST AND ITS IMPACT ON TRANSGENDER HEALTH, HIV CARE AND PREVENTION

REGISTER HERE!

WHAT: a 2-day virtual medical mistrust summit sponsored by [the Center for HIV Identification, Prevention, and Treatment Services](#)

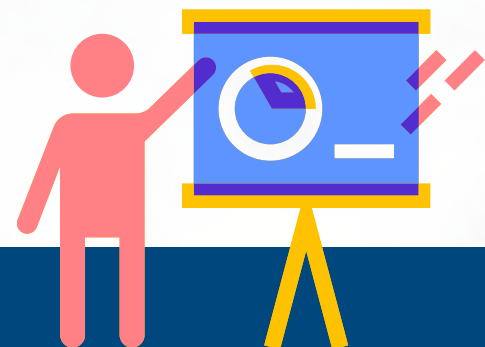
WHEN: Tuesday and Wednesday, March 1-2, 2022, from 10-2pm PST

WHO: Members of community-based organizations, clinics/hospitals, health departments, and/or healthcare teams providing HIV and other related services for transgender persons are encouraged to attend.

Discussion points during the medical mistrust summit are as followed:

- Describe the impacts of medical mis/distrust on the Transgender community.
- Explore strategies and tools healthcare organizations can use to address mis/distrust.
- Explain strategies and tools healthcare organizations can use to build trustworthiness.
- Discuss the policies and procedures healthcare organizations and hospital administrators do to build inclusive, safe, and just climates for the Transgender community.
- Identify and discuss collective for Transgender communities in healthcare settings.

If you have any questions, please contact Zami Tinashe Hyemingway, MSW (Zami, He, Him), at Zami.Hyemingway@dhha.org.



PSYCHOLOGY AND LGBTQ+ STATE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY WEBINAR

[REGISTER HERE!](#)

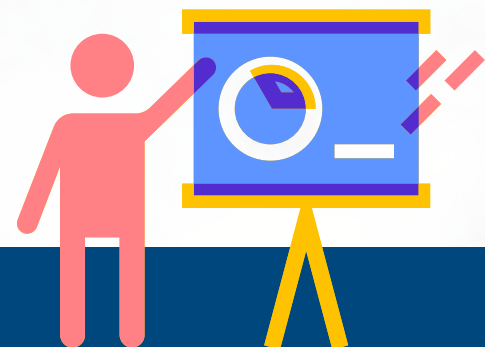
WHAT: a webinar exploring LGBTQ+ state legislative advocacy as psychologists, with six expert speakers

WHEN: Thursday, March 10th, 330-5pm EST

WHO: Psychologists and other mental health professionals are encouraged to attend

After last year's highly successful webinar, Psychology and LGBT+ State Legislative Advocacy 2021, this year's webinar will introduce updated and new content for 2022, feature examples of advocacy of psychologists, and also include content on developing advocacy skills.

Brought to you by the American Psychological Association, Division 44 Public Policy Committee, the APA Advocacy Office, and the APA Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Portfolio.



MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA PROGRAM

Military sexual trauma (MST) affects Veterans of all genders and sexual orientations. LGBTQ+ Veterans may be at increased risk of experiencing MST. VAPIHCS is here to support Veterans that experience MST.

-Veterans do not need to provide proof of MST or have ever reported the MST in the past to be believed and receive free MST-related care.

-MST is an experience, not a diagnosis, and there are many physical and mental health issues that might be caused or exacerbated by MST.

-To get connected to services for MST, call 1-800-214-1306 and ask for the MST Coordinator. You can be connected anonymously if desired. Alternatively, you can send a My HealtheVet Secure Message to “MST Coordinator.”

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Veterans with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) identities may face unique health challenges — including a higher risk for mental health issues and suicidal ideation than non-LGBTQ+ people.

Mental Health Triage: Walk-in, Monday-Friday 0730-1600 (located on the 1st floor of Ambulatory Care Center) or call 1-800-214-1306 and press option 2 & 4

Crisis Line numbers:

- Honolulu-ACCESS @ 808-832-3100
- Neighbor Islands-ACCESS @ 1-800-753-6879
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline @ 1-800-273-TALK, press 1

Website: www.veteranscrisisline.net

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.



LGBTQ+ PROGRAM

Our purpose is to foster an inclusive, knowledgeable, and affirming atmosphere for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Veterans at the VA PIHCS as well as to work toward resolving the health disparities that exist for LGBTQ+ Veterans.

LGBTQ+ Care Coordinator: Mary Harlinger, Ph.D. (she/her)

- The care coordination program aims to create a more welcoming environment, increase the number and variety of services, provide trainings, and advocate for quality care.

LGBTQ+ Special Emphasis Program Manager: Lisa Kau, Psy.D. (she/her)

- The special emphasis program aims to foster an inclusive and affirming atmosphere for LGBTQ+ employees, consumers, and visitors.

2021-2022 Psychology Postdoctoral Resident in LGBTQ+ Health: Steven Hobaica, Ph.D. (he/him)

- This program was established nationally to promote LGBTQ+ affirmative knowledge/practices across VA Medical Centers.

Resources for VA Employees: [LGBTQ+ Program - Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion \(ORMDI\) \(va.gov\)](#)

Resources for Veterans: [LGBTQ+ Program Website](#)

For more information, questions or feedback, call 808-433-7348 or send a secure message via MyHealtheVet to group: LGBTQ+ Care Coordination-VA Pacific Islands.